

Abstract. Napoleon's Italian Coronation has been neglected, or at best consigned to a footnote, by historical scholarship. The ceremony elicited immense expenditure and involved thousands of participants, but its true importance lay in the elusive, and somewhat confused, semiotic claims put forward by its organisers. The manner in which the events of May 1805 were choreographed reveal much about how French Imperialists viewed their nascent Empire and their relationship with their Northern Italian citizen-subjects. The argument put forward here is inspired by the concept of 'ornamentalism.' While the realities of imperial brutality, cultural chauvinism and economic exploitation over conquered territories cannot be brushed under the carpet, the reverse side of this coin is also worthy of further investigation. Nowhere more than in the satellite Kingdom of Italy did Napoleon seek to promote collaboration and local investment in his supranational Empire. He rewarded, honoured and rallied his Lombard and Emilian officials to endow them with a sense that they belonged to, and benefited from membership, of the wider imperial community. The Coronation in Milan, on 26 May 1805, was an essential experiment in the creation of new hierarchies and elite affinities. It left a mixed, though significant, legacy which was continued, to a certain extent, by Napoleon's Habsburg successors well into the first half of the nineteenth century.

Ornamentalism in a European Context?

Napoleon's Italian Coronation May 1805*

I

Napoleon was the first new dynast Europe had witnessed since the Hohenzollerns had become Kings in Prussia in 1701.¹ In many ways, this meant he was venturing into unknown territory. He could be described, using the well-known concept coined by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, as the first great impresario of 'invented traditions.'² As the work of, Philip Mansel, Luigi Mascilli Migliorini, Thierry Lentz and Jean Tulard has shown, Napoleon was a cultural acrobat when it came to creating ceremonies, symbols and institutions that, although brand new, preserved a patina of historical significance and nostalgia.³ When it came to counterfeiting heritage, he was *hors de pair*. The Imperial Coronation in Notre Dame and the establishment of the French Imperial Court have received substantial interest from researchers.⁴ More generally, Coronations and royal inaugurations, as instruments of the culture of power,

* My thanks to Prof. Martin Conway and to the two anonymous reviewers for their insightful suggestions in improving this article. The greatest debt of all goes to my father for being my kindest critic and most ruthless proof-reader, without his encouragement I would never have completed my research in Milan. I also thank Profs. Michael Broers, Munro Price and Dr Giacomo Macola for their inspiration and help when it came to researching this article.

¹ C. Clark, 'When Culture Meets Power: The Prussian Coronation of 1701,' in H.M. Scott and B. Simms eds., *Cultures of Power in Europe During the Long Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2007), pp.14-35.

² E. Hobsbawm & T. Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 2012), pp.1-14.

³ P. Mansel, *The Court of France 1789-1830* (Cambridge, 1991), ch.3; L. Mascilli Migliorini, *Il Mito dell'Eroe* (Naples, 2003); T. Lentz & P. Branda, *Quand Napoléon inventait la France: Dictionnaire des institutions politiques, administratives et de cour du Consulat et de l'Empire* (Paris, 2008); & J. Tulard, *Napoléon ou le mythe du sauveur* (Paris, 1983).

⁴ P. Mansel, *The Eagle in Splendour* (London, 2015); C.-O. Ziesenis, *Napoléon et la cour impériale* (Paris, 1980); J. Cabanis, *Le Sacre de Napoléon* (Paris, 1994); D. Chanteranne, *Le Sacre de Napoléon* (Paris, 2004); T. Lentz ed., *Le Sacre de Napoléon* (Paris, 2003); L. Chatel de Brancion, *Le Sacre de Napoléon* (Paris, 2004).

have been the subject of widespread reassessment from a variety of multidisciplinary angles.⁵ The same cannot be said when it comes to Napoleon's neglected investiture as King of Italy on Sunday 26 May 1805. The subject has been treated in a number of antiquarian articles which, though informative, have limited themselves to describing, rather than trying to analyse, the significance of this choreographed ritual.⁶

One exception can be found in Fausto Ruggieri who, having transcribed much of the liturgy for the ceremony, put forward an insightful, if not entirely persuasive, interpretation.⁷ For him, the Coronation marked the beginning of what some have called Napoleon's 'war against God.'⁸ According to his point of view, after the symbolic compromises made at the Paris *Sacre*, in December 1804, the Italian version of this ceremony was supposed to highlight the church's subordination to the state. While compelling, this argument does somewhat pre-date the intensification of the Napoleonic *Kulturkampf* (that culminated in 1809 with the occupation of Rome), and overestimates the disagreements that arose between civil and religious authorities over the organisation of this ritual.⁹ The planning stages of the Coronation reveal that there was significant clerical enthusiasm for the new Italian Kingdom. Equally, the attempts to integrate the Ambrosian liturgy within the rites of the Coronation highlight a respect for local religious sensibilities that would have been unthinkable elsewhere in the Empire.¹⁰

⁵ R. Jackson, *Vive le Roi! A History of the French Coronation from Charles V to Charles X* (London, 1984); Roy Strong, *Coronation: From the 8th to the 21st Century* (London, 2005); A. Hunt, *The Drama of Coronation: Medieval Ceremony in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2011); & D. Cannadine and S. Price eds., *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge, 1987).

⁶ A. Pingaud, 'Le voyage de Napoléon Ier en Italie (1805),' *Nouvelle Revue d'Italie*, Nos. I & II (1919); & by id., 'Le dernier voyage de Napoléon en Italie (1807),' *Nouvelle revue d'Italie*, Nos. I & II (1920); I, 340-452, 526-34, II 65-75; & F. Ruggieri 'La solenne incoronazione di Napoleone Bonaparte,' *Terra Ambrosiana* (March/April 2005)

⁷ Ruggieri, 'L'Incoronazione di Napoleone I a Re d'Italia nei Documenti Capitolari del Capitolo Metropolitano di Milano,' *Aevum*, Anno 79, Fasc. 3 (2005), pp.745-76.

⁸ Cf. M. Broers, *The Politics of religion in Napoleon Italy, The War Against God, 1801-1814* (London, 2002), passim.

⁹ E.E. Hales, *The Emperor and the Pope* (New York, 1961), pp.73-124.

¹⁰ Ruggieri, 'L'Incoronazione di Napoleone I,' pp.749-50.

Italian liberal historiography shares much in common with Ruggieri's interpretative stance. For liberals writing during the nineteenth century, this event was the final betrayal of the revolutionary ideals of the young general Bonaparte. As Carlo Botta argued:

Such splendour, combined with that of Paris [in December], obscured and contaminated Bonaparte and all his Italian glories. Whether in peace or war, he no longer worked for the fatherland, but abominably, his soul undertook to subjugate those who served him and place them under his yoke. The world and God would soon visit retribution: these were evil acts not glorious ones.¹¹

Botta's hyperbolic description of the magnificence of the Italian Coronation was narrated in parallel with the destruction of the Ligurian Republic, through its annexation into metropolitan France on June 30 1805. For this liberal historian, the lavishness of the festivities in Milan hid the naked aggrandisement of the Napoleonic Empire. Indeed, it was France's direct expansion into north-western Italy, and the creation of the satellite Kingdom in Lombardy and Emilia that accelerated the formation of the Third Coalition.¹²

Among French scholars, there has been a tendency to either downplay events in Milan as a curiosity or to paint them, without nuance, as the birth of the *Risorgimento*.¹³ Albert Sorel described confidently Milan's Coronation in the following triumphalist colours:

There was no trace of servility in this exuberant moment. He was the greatest man Italy had witnessed since Charlemagne. This man, who was of Italian blood and spoke the

¹¹ C. Botta, *Storia d'Italia dal 1789-1814*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1937), IV, 177.

¹² P. W. Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics 1763-1848* (Oxford, 1994), pp.239-40, & 266-70; & M. Broers, *Soldier of Destiny* (London, 2014), pp.513-21.

¹³ The Coronation gets two sentences in L. Madelin's monumental, *Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire*, 16 vols. (Paris, 1937-1954), V, 228; and equally T. Lentz's more recent description of the event is decidedly low key. See id., *Nouvelle Histoire du Premier Empire*, 4 vols. (Paris, 2002), I, 122.

Italian language, restored the Italian name to its proper place within the universe. A resurrected fatherland greeted Italy's future.'¹⁴

Historians of the Risorgimento agree that Napoleon's contribution to Italian nationhood was direct but decidedly unintentional.¹⁵ Sorel's linear depiction belies the complexity of this long convoluted process. Adolphe Thiers, for his part, was more circumspect in his analysis, and limited himself to noting, that Napoleon was crowned King of Italy with 'as much *éclat* as he had been in Paris six months previously.'¹⁶ Most scholars of the period still assume Napoleon's journey to Italy in 1805 was a mere footnote. After all, it was sandwiched between two momentous turning points: the assumption of the Imperial crown in May 1804 and the battle of Austerlitz a year later.

This article does not contend that the Coronation in Milan was more important than these celebrated events. Such a point of view would be absurd. It does, however, argue that this investiture has been neglected by historians and that it deserves more than a passing mention, or footnote, in a biography.¹⁷ The event's importance lay not in the immense expenditure and size of the ceremony, but rather in the delicate, and somewhat confused, semiotic claims put forward by its organisers. The manner in which the events of May 1805 were choreographed reveal much about how French Imperialists viewed their relationship with their Northern Italian citizen-subjects at the dawn of the Empire. The Coronation in Milan helps to correct portrayals of the French Imperium as merely an intolerant centralising behemoth that swept away

¹⁴ Albert Sorel, *L'Europe et la Révolution Française*, 8 vols. (Paris, 1885-1904), VI, 435.

¹⁵ L. Riall, *Risorgimento, The History of Italy from Napoleon to Nation State* (Basingstoke, 2009), pp.4-10; & A. de Francesco, *L'Italia di Bonaparte, Politica, Statualità, e Nazione nella Penisola tra Due Rivoluzioni 1796-1821* (Turin, 2011), ff. vii-xix

¹⁶ Adolphe Thiers, *Histoire du Consulat et l'Empire*, 20 vols. (Paris, 1845-1862), V, 400.

¹⁷ There seems to be no detailed treatment of this subject in English. A. Roberts does mention this ceremony in his recent BBC television program: *Napoleon*, Episode 2 (first aired on 8 July 2015); there are also recent references in Broers, *Soldier of Destiny*, p.517; & P. Dwyer, *Citizen Emperor: Napoleon in Power* (London, 2013), p.187.

everything that stood in its path.¹⁸ There is much truth to this classic interpretation, but it does not capture fully the complex realities of Italy under French rule. In 1805, the intolerant, chauvinistic Empire that promoted French cultural superiority, described so eloquently by Michael Broers, was in gestation rather than fully formed. Napoleonic scholarship of the past two decades has proposed, convincingly, that there was an ‘orientalist’ dimension and cultural imperialist agenda to France’s domination of the European mainland.¹⁹ The realities of imperial brutality, cultural chauvinism and economic exploitation over conquered territories cannot be denied.²⁰ However, between 1804-1805, the French *Imperium* was still uncrowned by its greatest military victories and great uncertainty reigned over its future direction. The administrators, politicians and generals in Paris realised that coercion, though an important instrument of governance, was not the sole means of cementing control of the western European crescent that fell under the French *aegis*.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty in understanding the Napoleonic Kingdom of Italy is that the term conjures up images of the state unified militarily by the Sabaudian dynasty during 1860s. This distorts, in a deeply anachronistic fashion, the administrative complexities that characterised the Napoleonic period. Since 1802, North Western Italy was part of Metropolitan France. Piedmont was divided into *départements réunis*, and administered directly from Paris.²¹ This administrative arrangement was very different from Lombardy and Emilia, which had been recovered from Austria in 1800. These former Habsburg and Papal provinces were

¹⁸ S. Woolf, *Napoleon's Integration of Europe* (London, 1991), passim; & id., ‘French Civilization and Ethnicity in the Napoleonic Empire,’ *Past & Present*, No.124 (1989), pp. 96-120.

¹⁹ M. Broers, ‘Cultural Imperialism in a European Context? Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Napoleonic Italy,’ *Past & Present*, No. 170 (2001), pp. 152-80; see also by id., *The Napoleonic Empire in Italy, 1796-1814, Cultural Imperialism in a European Context*, (New York, 2005); & Cf. S. Englund, ‘Monstre Sacré: The Question of Cultural Imperialism and the Napoleonic Empire,’ *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (2008), pp. 215-50.

²⁰ J.-L. Chappey, *La Société des Observateurs de l’Homme 1799-1804, Des Anthropologues au temps de Bonaparte* (Paris, 2002), esp. pp.336-90.

²¹ M. Broers, *Napoleonic Imperialism and the Savoyard monarchy, 1773-1821, State Building in Piedmont* (New York, 1997), passim.

governed as a separate satellite republic, whose capital was Milan.²² The remaining states of the Peninsula were divided among the Habsburgs, Neapolitan Bourbons and Papacy.

While the French found their Piedmontese and Ligurian subjects difficult to transform into loyal French citizens, the same was not the case in the satellite Republic of Italy. Here, native traditions of enlightened absolutism, economic and urban development meant that educated elites in these Lombard-Emilian provinces shared many of the values and administrative priorities of their French overlords.²³ Imperial administrators made more of an effort here, than they would anywhere else, to spare the feelings of the local inhabitants. They granted a number of autonomies, which would not have been tolerated in areas directly under French control.

These included: a different system of electoral colleges, a slightly modified judicial hierarchy and a separate concordat, where Catholicism, unlike in France, was proclaimed as the state religion.²⁴ The Italian Republic that ruled these provinces was certainly not a colony. In comparative terms, it was a hybrid between a 'dominion' and a 'protectorate' of its French masters.²⁵ Francesco Melzi d'Eril, Napoleon's vice-president, dreamed, vainly as it turned out, of a day when France's administrative and structural reforms would allow this Italian Republic to stand on its own feet.²⁶ Bonaparte, as president of this satellite state, had little desire that Italy achieve such levels of independence.²⁷ The limited reward for loyalty was a measure of local autonomy and direct participation in government. Most notably, government ministers,

²² C. Zaghi, *L'Italia di Napoleone* (Turin, 1989); D. Sella and C. Capra, *Il Ducato di Milano dal 1535 al 1796* (Turin, 1984), esp pp.557-617; & F. Venturi, *Italy and the Enlightenment* (New York, 1972), esp. Chs. 6,7 & 10.

²³ M. Broers, 'A Clash of Enlightenments: Judicial Reform in the Napoleonic Republic and Kingdom of Italy,' in id., *The Napoleonic Mediterranean: War, Power and Empire* (London, 2015).

²⁴ D. Arru, *Il Concordato Italiano del 1803* (Milano, 2003), pp.39-47; & M. Roberti, *Milano Capitale Napoleonica, La Formazione di Uno Stato Moderno 1796-1814*, 3 vols. (Milan, 1947), II, 95-110.

²⁵ J. Osterhammel, *Colonialism, A Theoretical Overview*, 2 edn. (Princeton, NJ, 2005), pp.10-12 & 27-37..

²⁶ See F. Melzi d'Eril [great grandson], *Francesco Melzi d'Eril 1753-1816, Milanese Scomodo e Grane Uomo di Stato, visto da un lontano pronipote* (Florence, 2000), esp.227-88; & N. del Bianco, *Francesco Melzi d'Eril: La Grande Occasione Perduta, Gli albori dell'indipendenza nell'Italia Napoleonica* (Milan, 2002), passim.

²⁷ A. Pingaud, *La Domination Française dans l'Italie du Nord (1796-1805)*, 2 vols (Paris, 1914), passim.

legislators, judges, military officers, prefects and bishops were all native Italians. This was not the case in adjacent Piedmont and other areas of the French Imperium, where French prefects and bishops ruled with an iron fist.²⁸ Several Italian radicals, and former functionaries of enlightened absolutists, speculated as to whether more autonomy might be granted in future. This process of keeping native elites guessing lay at the heart of the success of the Italian collaboration system in the satellite Kingdom. Napoleon bestowed much patronage and often hinted that more political rewards would follow. Italian elites listened and hoped that greater things would materialise.

²⁸ For a perfect example see, L. Antonielli, *I Prefetti dell'Italia Napoleonica* (Bologna, 1983).

II

Frederick Cooper has argued, persuasively, that all Empires seek to achieve a balance between what he has defined as ‘poles of incorporation and poles of differentiation.’²⁹ Too much assimilation calls into question, through the creation of equal ‘civilised’ citizens, an Empire’s legitimacy and right to rule. If the end result of a ‘civilising mission’ is progress, what justifies Imperial rule once social and economic advancement is established? On the other hand, policies that merely treat subjects as dangerous subversive ‘others’ creates a constant state of tension, unrest and precarious control. Empires, according to Cooper, seek to establish an equilibrium between these two tendencies in unsettled and ever changing circumstances. In 1805, the nascent Napoleonic Empire was willing to trial assimilationist and integrationist policies in Italy. Subsequent events, put a brake on these experiments.

The argument that follows is inspired by David Cannadine’s concept of ‘ornamentalism.’³⁰ As he put it:

Pace Edward Said and his ‘Orientalist’ followers, the British Empire was not exclusively (or even preponderantly) concerned with the creation of ‘otherness’ on the presumption that the imperial periphery was different from, and inferior to, the imperial metropolis: it was at least as much (perhaps more?) concerned with what has recently been called the ‘construction of affinities’ on the presumption that society on the periphery was the same, or even on occasions superior to, society in the metropolis.³¹

²⁹ All Empires had ‘to find a balance between the poles of incorporation (the empire’s claim that different subjects belonged within the empire) and differentiation (the empire’s claim that different subjects should be governed differently) was a matter of dispute and shifting strategies,’ in F. Cooper, *Colonialism in Question, Theory, Knowledge, History* (Los Angeles, 2005), p.154.

³⁰ D. Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (Oxford, 2001), *passim*.

³¹ *Ibid*, f.xix.

For Cannadine, the British Empire was not characterised solely by clashes over differences of race, gender, exoticism and other unbridgeable divides. Though these elements of separation were important, the foundation that kept the imperial edifice in place was a shared sense of hierarchy and status that connected the centre to its peripheries. Such networks could not be built exclusively on the subjugation, liquidation and oppression of non-European ‘others.’ Among British imperialists, there was a realisation that Indian princes, African chiefs, Malaysian Sultans and white settler elites, were similar and shared much with the aristocrats of the metropolis. As Cannadine states in a crucial passage of his book:

It was about antiquity and anachronism, tradition and honours, order and subordination; about glory and chivalry, horses and elephants, knights and peers, processions and ceremony, plumed hats and ermine robes; about chiefs and emirs, sultans and nawabs, viceroys and proconsuls, about thrones and crowns, dominion and hierarchy, ostentation and ornamentation.³²

Diverse practices, ceremonies, symbols, rites and participants gave the impression that the Imperial state was grounded on solid conservative values. In the face of an ever changing modern world, torn apart by economic and revolutionary forces, Imperial hierarchies provided a reassuring sense of permanence, tradition, heritage and concord between communities. Harmony and prosperity radiated downwards from the King-Emperor to the lowest colonial subject. This social order structured relations in the British Empire from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century.

Naturally, the Napoleonic context and French Imperialism were very different in nature from later transcontinental European Empires. Cannadine’s controversial, though stimulating,

³² Ibid, p.126.

interpretation is extremely helpful when it comes to trying to understand the hierarchy, symbols and rituals that were deployed to create the Kingdom of Italy.³³ It is argued here that the Italian Coronation was a supremely ‘ornamentalist’ moment. The crowning of Napoleon in Milan’s Duomo was, for the French Empire, what the Delhi Durbars were to be for the British Empire.³⁴ This was a prime moment in which to flaunt and display the cultural diversity that Imperial power had mastered.

Italian political elites, like Indian Maharajas and Nizams, were elevated, through this extraordinary ritual, to the position of stakeholders in the Napoleonic project. Theoretically, the Empire’s sovereignty was strengthened, rather than weakened, by its success in harnessing the centrifugal forces of localism through the co-optation of regional magnates and power brokers.³⁵ Napoleon would conquer more lands and acquire greater titles than any established monarch of the day. He was a truly transnational sovereign who did not want his unified Empire to degenerate into an early modern composite state.³⁶ His adherence to the enlightenment’s quest to rationalise government made him wary of traditions that fragmented his administrative and political authority. Despite disliking compromise, the Emperor realised, in 1805, the need to rule through some measure of consent and a sense of shared purpose (successive military victories eventually weakened the necessity for such compromise). The Italian Coronation was

³³ A. Burton, ‘Review of Ornamentalism,’ *American Historical Review*, No.107 (2002), pp. 497-8; I. Fletcher, ‘Review of Ornamentalism,’ *Victorian Studies*, No.45 (2003), pp. 532-4. For a more sympathetic treatment see, P. H. Hoffenberg ‘Review of Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire by David Cannadine,’ *Journal of World History*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (2003), pp. 264-9.

³⁴ R.E. Frykenberg, ‘The Coronation Durbar of 1911: Some Implications,’ in id. ed, *Delhi through the Ages: Essays in Urban History, Culture and Society* (Delhi, 1986), pp.369-90; M. Bence Jones, ‘Splendours of the Raj,’ *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, Vol. 132, No. 5331 (1984), pp. 155-70; for when things went wrong see, C. W. Nuckolls, ‘The Durbar Incident,’ *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (1990), pp. 529-59.

³⁵ R. Robinson, ‘Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: sketch for a theory of collaboration’ in R. Owen & B. Sutcliffe eds., *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism* (London, 1972), pp.117-42.

³⁶ J. H. Elliott, ‘A Europe of Composite Monarchies,’ *Past & Present*, No.137 (1992), pp. 48-71; & D W Hayton, J. Kelly, & J. Bergin eds., *The Eighteenth-Century Composite State: Representative Institutions in Ireland and Europe, 1689-1800* (Basingstoke, 2010).

an attempt to achieve this objective through a mass *ralliement* of the new aristocracy of his satellite Kingdom.³⁷

The foundation of the Empire in France, as Philip Dwyer has highlighted insightfully, was not the product of a single human will, but yet another attempt to stabilise French society and heal the revolutionary divisions of the 1790s. Elites in France hardly viewed it as the best of all possible worlds, but rather, as a compromise that allowed legitimists, moderates and former Jacobins to work together in a stable political order.³⁸ Annie Jourdan, in an incisive chapter, speculated persuasively that Napoleon in 1804 created the constitutional monarchy that Louis XVI had so spectacularly failed to establish in 1790.³⁹ The subsequent Coronation in Notre Dame sought unsuccessfully, according to Dwyer and many others, to sacralise the transition from republic to constitutional monarchy. It combined notions of social contract, popular consent, papal unction and dynastic succession together in a confused panoply of symbols, gestures and rites that failed to make a lasting impression on French society.⁴⁰

Perhaps the biggest problem for the Coronation in the Duomo was that it used the French *Sacre* of 1804 as a template. The divisions which characterised Italian society did not quite originate in the same revolutionary *caesura* that had torn France apart since the 1790s. A complex jumble of geographic factors, *ancien régime* legacies and the Cisalpine culture of regionalism meant that the *grandees* of Northern Italy had no tradition of working together under the same state. A number of supplementary symbols, rituals and gestures had to be ‘invented’ to suit the Italian context and build new bonds. The attempt to reconcile French Imperial hegemony with the sensibilities of Italian collaborators and elites led to an extremely

³⁷ M. Broers, *Europe under Napoleon 1799-1815* (London, 1996), pp.99-143.

³⁸ P. Dwyer, ‘Napoleon and the Foundation of the Empire,’ *The Historical Journal*, Vol.53 No.2 (2010), pp.339-58.

³⁹ A. Jourdan, ‘Conclusion: The Napoleonic Empire in the Age of Revolutions: The Contrast of Two National Representations,’ in M. Broers, P. Hicks and A. Guimerà eds., *The Napoleonic Empire and the New European Political Culture* (Basingstoke, 2012), pp.313-26.

⁴⁰ P. Dwyer, ‘Citizen Emperor, Political Ritual, Popular Sovereignty and the Coronation of Napoleon I’ *History, Journal of the Historical Association*, vol.100, no.339 (2015), pp.40-57.

complicated ceremony filled with competing, at times contradictory, semiotic claims. The ritual of 1804 was yet another attempt to end the Revolution. Six months later, the rites of Milan attempted to create an 'ornamentalist' Empire. The same ceremony remarkably proved unfit to deliver either of these objectives in the short term.

Both the Emperor-King and his Imperial officials admired the legacy of Rome and the Renaissance that provided the intellectual and cultural backdrop for the peninsula.⁴¹ The Coronation in Milan showed that he wished to tap into this heritage and use it to solidify his rule. He wanted to show the Melzis, Littas, Capraras, Marescalchis, Valdrighis, and Aldinis of this subalpine region, that they were not conquered peoples but associates in the Imperial project.⁴² Admittedly, the attempt did not entirely convince its intended audience. Italian elites, with some scepticism, hoped that collaboration with their French masters would bring advancement. It is difficult to assess complex cultural practices, like rituals and investitures, in simple terms of success or failure. One of the most sterile debates is whether the Paris or Milan crowning were better or more beautiful.⁴³

It is important, at this juncture, to highlight that there was a major difference that divided Napoleonic 'ornamentalism' from British 'ornamentalism.' The British Empire's hierarchies and orders were supposed to act as an antidote against the dangers and vagaries of modernity. Cannadine's 'ornamentalism' is anachronistic and backward looking in essence. Nothing could have been further from the mind of French Imperialists in the early nineteenth century. Their vision of Empire was intrinsically about bringing modernity and Napoleonic civilisation to Europe's peripheries. Unlike the British later in the century, the French believed that advancement, reform and social conservatism could, paradoxically, work hand in a hand.

⁴¹ Something that persisted throughout the French Empire's involvement in Italy. see, R. T. Ridley, *The Eagle and the Spade, The Archaeology of Rome during the Napoleonic Era 1809-1814* (Cambridge, 1992), pp.47-93.

⁴² C. Capra, 'Nobili, notabili, élite: dal 'modello' francese al caso italiano,' *Quaderni Storici*, Vol.13, No.1 (1978) pp.12-42.

⁴³ Cf. E. Pigni, 'Le Due Incoronazioni di Napoleone,' *Aevum*, Anno 79, Fasc. 3 (2005), pp.739-44.

They hoped that the creation of a new ceremonial and hierarchical order, encrusted with invented traditions, could influence the imagination of local elites and stimulate a sense of loyalty to the regime and its vision of enlightened progress.⁴⁴ The rhetoric, deployed during the Italian Coronation, was that only the French Empire could make the Italian Kingdom fit to meet the challenges of the future. France's enlightened culture, that promoted civilised values and administrative efficiency, would counteract the degeneration in which Italian society had languished for centuries.⁴⁵

The crowning in Milan's Duomo was supposed to create an indissoluble symbolic bond between the elite collaborators of the Italian Kingdom and their Imperial masters.⁴⁶ Italian notables were given centre stage in Milan, which provided them with their own space in the symbolic order and rituals of the Empire. The ceremony tried to highlight that Napoleonic progress could create hierarchies on its peripheries that were as harmonious and stable as those of the Old Order. This essentially carpeted over the divisions that characterised the upper echelons of Napoleonic society in Italy. Mapping the French social order onto the plains of the Cisalpine region was going to be extremely difficult. Italians had historical, municipal, regional and corporate rivalries that made the prospect of establishing a unified elites precarious.

It was the case that the Napoleonic Empire did try to accommodate and welcome Italian associates into its fold in 1805. This argument does not deny that the French Empire's primary goal, as warfare expanded throughout the decade, was the military domination and economic exploitation of all conquered lands.⁴⁷ Yet such forms of compulsion, as the new Napoleonic history has shown, were only half the story. French Imperialists, where possible, wished to

⁴⁴ For a broader analysis see, M. Broers, 'Napoleon, Charlemagne, and Lotharingia: Acculturation and the Boundaries of Napoleonic Europe,' *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (2001), pp. 135-54

⁴⁵ S. Patriarca, *Italian Vices, Nation and Character from the Risorgimento to the Republic* (Cambridge, 2010), pp.20-50.

⁴⁶ Indeed a proper *ancien régime* order of chivalry was created after the Coronation to fulfil this purpose: E. Pigni, *L'Ordine della Corona di ferro e le altre ricompense concesse da Napoleone I nel Regno Italico* (Florence, 2014).

⁴⁷ Woolf, *Napoleon's Integration of Europe*, pp.133-84.

avoid oppressing Italian lawyers, officials and aristocrats. Subjugation, as Spain was to show, was a much more expensive business than cooperation. Inducements, both tangible and symbolic, were to be proffered. Italy's place within the nascent Empire needed to be defined, not just through legal and administrative reforms, but also decoded in ceremonial and cultural terms. This quest to decipher the nature of local elites and their culture could lead to as much confusion as clarity. The rituals and practices of Imperial co-optation of elites, explored in this article, were not exclusive to the Italian context (although it does appear to suit it best). Similar arguments may well hold for the Dutch, German and Polish Satellite Kingdoms.⁴⁸ Jasper Heinzen has recently put forward a similar view concerning British Hannover and Daniel O'Neill has argued that Edmund Burke had a similar understanding for the mechanisms of British Imperial rule.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Unfortunately, the only history of the satellite kingdoms is in need of an update. See, O. Connelly, *Napoleon's Satellite Kingdoms, Managing Conquered Peoples* (Malabar, 1990), passim; & J. Czuby, *The Duchy of Warsaw, 1807-1815, A Napoleonic Outpost in Central Europe* (London, 2016), chs. 2 & 8.

⁴⁹ J. Heinzen, 'Transnational Affinities and Invented Traditions: The Napoleonic Wars in British and Hanoverian Memory, 1815–1915' *English Historical Review*, No.529 (2012), p.1419; & D. I. O'Neill, *Edmund Burke and the Conservative Logic of Empire* (Los Angeles, 2016), pp.1-3, 54-58, 100-10, 158-67 & the conclusion.

III

When they first arrived in Lombardy in the late 1790s, the Directory had imposed ‘gratitude to the French liberators’ as an article of the new constitution of its Italian protectorate.⁵⁰ This was reinforced further by an annual feast of gratitude in which Lombards and Emilians were supposed to compete in public displays of obsequiousness. Realising that ‘thankfulness’ was a difficult sentiment to instil in any population, Bonaparte developed a more practical and realistic cultural agenda. Abstractions made way for the cult of the Hero and the individual genius.⁵¹ The president of the Italian Republic was the perfect man to resurrect the fortunes of Italy. On the surface at least, the satellite republic was a complex partnership between Italian civilian administrators and French military officers

As time went by, a number of problems, and scandals, especially the Ceroni affair,⁵² showed that the relationship between Italy and France could reach the brink of collapse. Early in 1803, Captain Giuseppe Ceroni published a rather mediocre poem that was critical of Bonaparte and unhelpfully dedicated it to a state counsellor in Milan, named Cicognara. Joachim Murat, the commander of French forces in Italy, decided to use the affair as a pretext to discredit Napoleon’s Italian vice-president Melzi d’Eril, whom he disliked for his opposition to French army expenditure in Northern Italy. Ultimately, Murat over-played his hand by not only arresting Ceroni but also the prefect of Magenta, counsellor Cicognara and a former Italian minister of war, general Teulié. In the wake of these arrests, Melzi sent an indignant letter of resignation to the First Consul.

⁵⁰ A[rchivio] di S[tato] di Mi[lano], Atti di Governo, Potenze Sovrane, 126 & 129, Festa della Riconoscenza alla Repubblica Francese.

⁵¹ Migliorini, *Il Mito dell'Eroe*, passim.

⁵² Varni, *Bologna Napoleonica*, pp.181-5; & Zaghi, *L'Italia di Napoleone*, pp.48-9.

Napoleon decided not to inflame the situation. He confirmed his esteem and full confidence in his vice-president, whilst censoring Murat for over-zealousness and urging him to respect all Italian authorities.⁵³ All those arrested were reinstated in government service and, after a brief spell in prison, Ceroni too received a pardon. The relationship between Bonaparte, his Italian collaborators and the French military, at times, seemed to resemble a tempestuous love triangle. Melzi d'Eril, as a former Josephist reformer, shared many of Bonaparte's objectives, but worryingly, as the Ceroni affair proved, was far too wilful and independent to be simply a vassal of Paris.⁵⁴

The foundation of the French Empire and the Coronation of Napoleon as Emperor made Italy's continued existence as a republic problematic.⁵⁵ The French transition to 'constitutional monarchy' provided an opportunity to tighten and clarify the relationship between Paris and Milan that was too good to be missed. After the proclamation of the Empire in May 1804, the transformation of Northern Italy into a monarchical regime was to be a convoluted process. An offer of the Italian crown was made, by the Italian *Consulta di Stato*, to the French Emperor, during the first half of the year.⁵⁶ On 23 June, unwilling to accept the conditions of this proposal, Napoleon played for time. During the subsequent months, the momentum accelerated, as calls for the republic to be converted into a Kingdom increased.⁵⁷ General Pino the commander of Italian troops at the Boulogne camp was among the first, in May 1804, to propose that the Emperor of the French should also be King of Italy.⁵⁸ The *Consulta di Stato*,

⁵³ N. del Bianco, *Il Coraggio e la Sorte, Gli Italiani nell'età Napoleonica dalle Cisalpine al Regno Italico* (Milan, 1997), pp.215-6.

⁵⁴ Melzi d'Eril, *Francesco Melzi d'Eril 1753-1816*, pp.281-3.

⁵⁵ Zaghi, *L'Italia di Napoleone*, pp.49-52.

⁵⁶ A. Pillepich, *Napoleone e gli Italiani* (Bologna, 2005), pp.49-51.

⁵⁷ Fondation Napoléon, *Napoléon Bonaparte Correspondance Générale*, 15 vols (Paris, 2004-2018), IV, No.8953 23 June 1804, pp.743-4 [Henceforth: NAP NOUV CORRES].

⁵⁸ Pillepich, *Napoleone e gli Italiani*, p.49.

the Italian equivalent of the *Conseil d'État*, spent the better part of January and February negotiating secretly on what terms this transition should happen.⁵⁹

Unwisely the Emperor wrote to Francis II, on 1 January 1805, announcing that his brother Joseph would ascend the Milanese throne.⁶⁰ Very disingenuously, the French Emperor kept assuring his Habsburg counterpart that the Italian Kingdom was a separate entity, and that the Empire's armies would soon withdraw once the Peninsula's security from foreign invasion could be guaranteed. Russia, Austria and Britain had already begun military preparations, the establishment of a satellite Kingdom in Northern Italy catalysed the formation of the Third Coalition against France.⁶¹ Both Joseph and Louis Bonaparte forced their imperial brother's hand, when they refused the throne, knowing that acceptance would mean renouncing their rights of succession to the French Empire.⁶² The initial offer of the throne, by the *Consulta*, was too constraining, and the eventual deal which was reached watered it down considerably.⁶³ The compromise was unsurprisingly very similar to the proclamation that created the French Empire. On 17 March 1805, a delegation of the *Consulta* offered Napoleon the crown of Italy in a formal ceremony at the French Senate, where he accepted this additional royal title.⁶⁴

In return he promised to guarantee the religion, the borders and the political & civil liberties of the Kingdom. Exactly as in France, the irrevocability of the sale of national lands, that had once belonged to *ancien régime* clergy and nobility, was enshrined in the constitution.⁶⁵ The central difference related to the law of succession. It was stated that Napoleon's successor could not hold the crowns of both France and Italy in a personal union.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ NAP NOUV CORRES, No.9483, Paris, 11 nivôse an XIII [1^{er} janvier 1805], V, 20.

⁶¹ Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics*, pp.257-76.

⁶² L. Mascilli Migliorni, *Napoleone, L'Uomo che esportò la Rivoluzione in tutta Europea* (Roma, 2014), pp.235-8.

⁶³ By this time relations between Napoleon and Melzi were strained to say the least. NAP NOUV CORRES, No.9149, Saint Omer, 10 fructidor an XII [28 août 1804], IV, 841.

⁶⁴ NAP NOUV CORRES, Nos. 9693 & 9695, La Malmaison, 25 ventôse an XIII [16 mars 1805], V, 133-4.

⁶⁵ Pigni, 'Le Due Incoronazioni di Napoleone,' p.742.

However, article five of the proclamation of the new Kingdom specified that a successor would only be nominated once the French evacuated Naples, the Russians Corfu and the British Malta.⁶⁶ It would take until 16 February 1806, the fourth constitutional statute, for Napoleon to nominate his stepson Eugène de Beauharnais as his heir to the Italian Kingdom.⁶⁷ It was decided that Napoleon would travel in May to his Cisalpine Kingdom and be invested with his new title.⁶⁸

Barring the creation of the French Empire, no immediate Italian precedents, excluding obscure medieval ones, existed which could act as a model for this ceremony. The Napoleonic Kingdom of Italy was a fabrication whose historical roots were a contrivance at best.⁶⁹ It bore little relation to the medieval Kingdom of the Lombards which, between the sixth and eighth centuries, had covered much of the peninsula.⁷⁰ As already discussed, the Parisian *Sacre*, of December 1804, with some additional prescriptions from the *pontificale romanum* would provide a basic ceremonial and liturgical template for the Italian crowning.⁷¹ Very little was recorded in the archival sources concerning the rationale behind the ceremonial choices made on this occasion. The best source remains a letter from Napoleon, sent on 28 March 1805, to Louis Philippe de Ségur, the Imperial Grand Master of Ceremonies.⁷² The Emperor again reiterated that the list of attendees and the ceremonial procedures should mirror those of 2 December 1804 in Notre Dame. Most importantly he stated that unlike in Paris:

⁶⁶ ASMi, Atti di Governo, Potenze sovrane 146, Statuto Costituzionale del Regno d'Italia, 19 marzo 1805.

⁶⁷ ASMi, Atti di Governo, Potenze sovrane 146, Quarto Statuto Costituzionale del Regno d'Italia, 16 febbraio 1806; & right until 1814 attempts were made to keep Eugène in place in Milan. See, D. Spadoni, *Milano e la congiura militare nel 1814 per l'indipendenza italiana*, 3 vols. (Modena, 1937).

⁶⁸ ASMi, Atti di Governo, Potenze sovrane 146, Coronation, decrees issued on 22 March 1805

⁶⁹ For an interesting take on this see, N. Davies, *Vanished Kingdoms, The History of Half-Forgotten Europe* (London, 2011), pp.493-538; & P. H. Wilson, *The Holy Roman Empire, A Thousand Years of Europe's History* (London, 2016), pp.21-42.

⁷⁰ N. Christie, *The Lombards* (Oxford, 2002), pp.69-108.

⁷¹ Ruggieri, 'L'Incoronazione di Napoleone I,' p.749.

⁷² NAP NOUV CORRES, No.9747 Saint-Cloud, 7 germinal an XIII [28 mars 1805], V, 161.

I will not be consecrated, but only crowned. The regalias of Charlemagne, of the French Empire and of the Kingdom of Lombardy, will be present at the Coronation.⁷³

This was an important distinction that has not been emphasised sufficiently by scholars in the field. According to the state sanctioned *Cérémonial de l'Empire Français*, Napoleon was sealed with holy oil during the Coronation at Notre Dame in Paris. The official record, published after the ceremony at Notre Dame, noted that the Emperor received a *triple onction* from the Pope.⁷⁴ This occurred just after the hymn *veni creator spiritus* and the litanies. On 27 April 1805 Ségur wrote to Felici, the Italian Minister of the Interior, that:

His Majesty will be crowned and not consecrated [in Milan], he has made this choice because one can only be consecrated once whereas one can be crowned in different countries several times.⁷⁵

Beyond doubt Napoleon was sealed with holy, though unmiraculous, oil by the Pope at the French *Sacre*.⁷⁶ It was Jean-Étienne-Marie Portalis, one of the chief negotiators of the Concordat, who advised incorrectly the new Emperor that the founders of all new dynasties needed to be sealed with holy oil by the Pope.⁷⁷ It was probably from this original ceremonial

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ 'S.S. a fait à l'Empereur une triple onction, l'une sur la tête, les autres dans les deux mains.' Louis-Philippe de Ségur, *Cérémonial de l'empire français: contenant, 1e. Les honneurs civils et militaires à rendre aux autorités militaires, civiles et ecclésiastiques de l'Empire, et aux différentes personnes occupant des places, à qu'il en est dû d'après le décret impérial* (Paris, 1805) p.20; & J. Tulard, *Le Sacre de l'Empereur Napoléon, Histoire et Légende* (Paris, 2004), p.46

⁷⁵ ASMI, Atti di Governo, Potenze Sovrane 148, 28 avril 1805, Ségur to Felici.

⁷⁶ Cf. G. Ellis, 'Religion according to Napoleon: The limitations of Pragmatism,' in N. Aston, ed, *Religious Changes in Europe 1650-1914* (London, 1997), p. 246. According to Ellis there was no formal religious service during the *Sacre*. This seems to be taking the argument too far and stating that the religion had no place in Napoleon's initial Coronation. It is true that the constitutional oath and the crowning were secular moments. Yet the consecration and Coronation mass were supremely religious in character. The French *Sacre* was hybrid in nature rather than secular. Catholicism played its part but was subordinate to the state.

⁷⁷ J.-O. Boudon, *Napoléon et les Cultes, Les religions en Europe à l'aube du XIX^e siècle 1800-1815* (Paris, 2002), p.126.

error that Ségur deduced that multiple Coronations were possible but that Monarchs could only be consecrated once.⁷⁸ Despite its factual inaccuracy, this assumption worked well in tandem with the French ‘ornamentalist’ vision of Northern Italy. The ceremony in Milan was different from that in Paris in that it was a reaffirmation of Napoleon’s regality, rather than the inauguration of a new dynasty. The Coronation at Milan was supposed to display Napoleon’s might as the sovereign of multiple lands, and also highlight that the Lombards & Emilians were willing, though subordinate, partners in this enterprise. The lack of a consecration ranked events in Milan, ceremonially speaking, beneath those of Paris. There was no intention that the festivities in Italy would surpass those of Notre Dame. To avoid this danger, it was ordered that the cost of the ceremony was not to exceed one hundred thousand francs.⁷⁹

Bearing this in mind, the ceremony was not meant in any way to humiliate Napoleon’s Italian subjects. The emphasis to a remarkable extent, given the increasingly authoritarian nature of the Empire, was on diversity and inclusivity. The hierarchical procession of Italian elites and the creation of a tributary monarchy was an impressive achievement. It highlighted the strength of the Empire in controlling large territories with contrasting cultures and traditions. Accommodation and conciliation were the medium and the message here. It has been recorded that three crowns were present on this occasion, but actually there were four:

1. The French Imperial crown.
2. Charlemagne’s crown (a modern replica).

⁷⁸ No mention of this is made in M. Sodi and A. Toniolo eds, *Pontificale Romanum, Editio typica 1961-1962* (Vatican, 2009). To this day there are still four chapters entitled ‘*De Benetictione Coronatione Regis & Reginae*,’ obviously catholic bishops remain optimistic that they will preside over Coronations.

⁷⁹ NAP NOUV CORRES, No.9747, Saint-Cloud, 7 germinal an XIII [28 mars 1805], V,161-2.

3. A new diadem was commissioned for the Kingdom of Italy, described by, Napoleon's Italian Minister, Ferdinando Marescalchi as an imitation of that worn by Spanish Kings since the time of Philip II.⁸⁰
4. Finally, the most important jewel present was the ancient crown of the Lombard Kings, or Iron Crown, inside which was placed, according to legend, one of the nails of Christ's Passion.

This ancient masterpiece of medieval goldsmithry was (and is) housed in the Cathedral of Monza. It was both a symbol of royal power and a sacred relic, popularly known as the Iron Crown. Modern scientific analysis has done much to shatter the myths surrounding this sacred symbol of royalty. From carbon dating analysis, it seems that no part of this artefact dates from the reign of Constantine, as alleged by some chronicles, but rather it is an ensemble of Lombard and Carolingian components. Disappointingly most of the jewels are 'paste' and of little or no monetary value. The crown is comprised of six sections held together by a metal ring, or circumference, supposed to be a melted down nail from the crucifixion of Christ. This circumference it has been discovered is composed entirely of silver, and disappointingly for the devout, unlikely to be authentic. The crown has a fifteen-centimetre diameter and it seems safe to assume that it is missing a substantial number of its original sections. For some Coronations a special hat, with a purpose made mounting, had to be constructed to make it serviceable.⁸¹

Yet in the early nineteenth century, the origins of the crown still were shrouded in legend. The Emperor-King expected, through osmosis, to share in the mystique of this holy

⁸⁰ ASMI, Ministero degli Esteri, Prima Divisione (detto Marescalchi), Mareslachi 70, 20 febbraio 1805, Marescalchi to the Consulta, cited in Pigni 'Le Due Incoronazioni di Napoleone,' pp.740-1.

⁸¹ V. Maspero, *La Corona Ferrea, la storia del più antico e celebre simbolo del potere in Europa* (Monza, 2003), pp.115-23; & for a post-Napoleonic account see, A. Bellani, *Corona Ferrea del Regno d'Italia considerata I come monumento d'arte II come monumento storico III come monumento sacro. Memoria Apologetica* (Milan 1819), with a dedication to Archduke Ranier.

and regal object.⁸² Combined, these crowns made direct reference to the ancient Lombard Kings, to Charlemagne and to the Habsburg Kings of Spain. It is unclear what precise historical narrative was being deployed on this occasion, except that Napoleon's ascent to power was the culmination of the history of these lands. The overly subtle use of heritage was supposed to legitimise the French Empire not as an intrusive conquering power but as one respectful of the traditions of its Italian citizen-subjects.⁸³ To emphasize further such imperial equanimity, modifications were applied to the liturgy to incorporate the native Ambrosian rite of Milan.⁸⁴ The ceremony was clearly different, from that of Notre Dame, in terms of its choreography and religious significance. Napoleon wanted hungrily to flaunt that his power overshadowed that of the Holy Roman Empire and, that like Charlemagne, he wore several crowns.⁸⁵

Practical problems quickly emerged, as the date set for the festivities, 22 May, was fewer than two months away. The army of artisans, tailors, musicians, singers, decorators, artists, masons, carpenters and printers had very little time to complete the work.⁸⁶ In particular, the design of new ceremonial uniforms for this occasion proved a logistical nightmare. In the end, French Imperial Uniforms and Coronation Robes were used as templates.⁸⁷ It was decided that Italy would be represented through green silk and silver embroidery, instead of the blue and gold of France.⁸⁸

Separate insignia for the Kingdom of Italy were designed prior to the ceremony. These emblems of power now needed to be reproduced quickly in large quantities. Canopies and other

⁸² A. Pillepich, 'Napoleon 1er et la Couronne de Fer,' in G. Bucellati ed., *La Corona Ferrea nell'Europa degli imperi* (Milan, 1995) pp.197-212.

⁸³ R. Harrison ed., *Understanding the Politics of Heritage* (Manchester, 2010), esp. chs. 3 & 5.

⁸⁴ N. Valli, *Breve introduzione al rito ambrosiano* (Milan, 2014), passim, pp.15-16.

⁸⁵ Broers, *The Politics of religion in Napoleon Italy*, f.xii.

⁸⁶ ASMI, Atti di Governo, Potenze Sovrane 142, the account books for the armies of artisans involved in preparing the Duomo.

⁸⁷ ASMI, Atti di Governo, Potenze Sovrane 148, 27 mars, 1805, Talleyrand to Felici on ceremonial costumes; 4 April 1805 Spannochi to Felici, on judicial robes; Segur to Felici 20 mai 1805, on heralds' tabards.

⁸⁸ ASMI, Atti di Governo, Potenze Sovrane 148, Extrait. Note du costume que devront avoir les diverses autorités du Royaume d'Italie à la solennité du sacre et couronnement de SM.

textiles bearing the royal coat of arms were to litter the city and its streets. Armies of tailors and seamstresses, worked their fingers numb desperately trying to get all these items ready. These new coats of arms sought to illustrate both the priorities of the Empire and the place that Italians, as partners, held within this project. As was often the case in Napoleonic Northern Italy a certain tension between the idea of ‘subordination’ and ‘association’ emerged. The Kingdom was represented, through a large quartered shield, brandishing the different coats of arms of the all the regions that composed this north Italian satellite.⁸⁹

Inexplicably the arms of Piedmont, Venetia and the Papal States appeared on the royal Italian arms. This allowed speculation to emerge on whether Napoleon was hinting that French Piedmont might one day be ceded to Italy (perhaps, it was a way of keeping his subjects and foreign rivals guessing about his ultimate intentions). Equally, one can understand why the Habsburg Emperor, who ruled Venetia, cannot have found Napoleon’s reassurances, that he had no expansionist aims in Northern Italy, convincing. After all, Francis II’s Italian province, represented by a lion of Saint Mark wearing a liberty cap, appeared in Napoleon’s arms!⁹⁰ Similarly, Cardinal Consalvi protested against the inclusion of the Petrine keys in the arms of the new Kingdom.⁹¹

The Imperial Grand Master of Ceremonies, the comte de Ségur, was the first to arrive in Milan having departed Paris on 27 March.⁹² Napoleon was to follow at the slower pace of a triumphal progress through Southern France. The Imperial Chamberlain, Camille de Tournon-Simiane, was given the sensitive mission of transporting two sets of crown jewels across the Alps back and forth.⁹³ The correspondence between Talleyrand and the Italian Minister of War

⁸⁹ G. C. Bascapé e M. del Piazzo eds, *Insegne e simboli. Araldica pubblica e privata, medievale e moderna, Parte Terza, Araldica Napoleonica in Italia* (Rome, 1983), pp.760-1.

⁹⁰ As Mascilli Migliorni puts it, the Coronation sounded like a *cri de guerre* to Austria: *Napoleone*, p.237.

⁹¹ I. Ranieri, *Napoleone e Pio VII 1804-1813, Relazioni Storiche su Documenti Inediti dell’Archivio Vaticano* (Turin, 1906), pp.155-8.

⁹² NAP NOUV CORRES, No.9747, Saint-Cloud, 7 germinal an XIII [28 mars 1805], V,161-2.

⁹³ J. Moulard, *Le comte Camille de Tournon, préfet de la Gironde, 1815-1822* (Paris, 1914).

General Pino indicates that the authorities were concerned that brigands would take advantage of this situation to ambush Tournon and steal the *diamants de le couronne*.⁹⁴ During both April and June, the Imperial Chamberlain was provided with large escorts of both Italian gendarmes and troops of the line to help him safely ship his cargo.⁹⁵ Another distinguished individual travelling at break neck speed towards the Italian Capital was Cardinal-Archbishop Caprara of Milan.⁹⁶ As Papal Legate *a latere* to the French Court, he resided normally in Paris and therefore had to resume quickly his See in order to crown the new King of Italy.⁹⁷

Ségur spent an exhausting six weeks in delicate negotiations with the different authorities of the Kingdom to define their roles and participation in the forthcoming celebrations. The ceremonial procedures and decisions elaborated were a subtle balancing act of competing interests.⁹⁸ The state archives of Milan preserve a substantial number of letters that Ségur sent to the Italian ministers of war, interior, finance, justice and cults. The organisation of such a large occasion required a large team to facilitate the management of an event that involved almost a thousand spectators and participants. Ségur also had several private meetings with the Archbishop of the metropolis and, the liturgical master of ceremonies of the Duomo, Monsignor Berterelli. Never far from Ségur's mind were his original instructions. Napoleon had reminded him in March that the Kingdom of Italy had no master, nor deputy master, of ceremonies. He was to select candidates and then submit them for the approval of the incoming Emperor. For reasons that are not entirely clear the first choice,

⁹⁴ ASMI, Atti di Governo, Potenze Sovrane 148, 19 april 1805 Marescalchi to Felici announcing the imminent arrival of the crown jewels.

⁹⁵ ASMI, Atti di Governo, Potenze Sovrane 148, 10 juin 1805, Talleyrand to General Pino, on Tournon's departure with crown jewels; 11 giugno 1805, Pino to Talleyrand, reassuring him that every safety precaution has been taken.

⁹⁶ ASMI, Atti di Governo, Potenze Sovrane 148, 13 avril 1805, Ségur to Caprara, requesting a meeting to discuss the Coronation; Undated, Felici to Ségur, meeting tomorrow with Caprara; mardi 29 avril 1805, Ségur to Felici, requesting an urgent meeting with Card. Caprara.

⁹⁷ J. Charon-Bourdas, *La Légation en France du Cardinal Caprara 1801-1808* (Paris, 1979); & C. Castiglioni, *Napoleone e la Chiesa Milanese* (Milan 1933), passim.

⁹⁸ The clerical side of this compromise can be found in, A[rchivio] C[apitolare] M[etropolitano] di M[ilano], Fondo Liturgico, Cart.44, Fasc.1, Esp. Cerimoniale Liturgico dell'incoronazione di Napoelone.

Bonacosi, was dropped by Napoleon.⁹⁹ Finally on 16 May, the *marchese* Stampa-Soncino was elevated to the position of Master of Ceremonies for the Italian Kingdom and Salmatoris was made his deputy.

Invitations were prepared and issued in April to all senior officials and grantees of the Kingdom (see table).¹⁰⁰ As was inevitable, the list of invitees, and omissions from it, led to a litany of complaints. Re-mapping the hierarchies established by the French *Sacre* onto the

Preliminary list of Italian attendees for the Coronation 22 March 1805

The following corporations were invited ex-officio:

1. Grand Officers, Officers and Ministers of the Crown of Italy
2. The Three Electoral Colleges: Possidenti, Commercianti and Dotti [Land owners, Merchants and Intelligentsia]
3. Consulta di stato [Council of State]
4. Consiglio Legislativo
5. Corpo Legislativo
6. Tribunale di Cassazione
7. Archbishops & Bishops
8. Generals of Division and Brigade
9. **Tribunali di Revisione [added after 22-23 April]**
10. Contabilità Nazionale [Ministry of Finance]
11. Prefects
12. **Presidents of the Appeal Courts [added after 22-23 April]**
13. **Government Commissioners of the Appeal Courts [added after 22-23 April]**
14. Colonels
15. Presidents of the departmental councils and administrators
16. President of the municipal councils of departmental capi luoghi and administrations
17. Delegation from the National Institutes of Pavia and Bologna
18. Delegation from all army Corps

Source: ASMI, Atti di Governo, Potenze Sovrane 148

Italian social landscape was no simple matter. Northern Italy's order of precedence was different given the nature of the Kingdom's internal organisation. The Italian Concordat of 1803 recognised Catholicism as the state religion and prelates wanted places of honour in the

⁹⁹ ASMI, Atti di Governo, Potenze Sovrane 148, [?] mai 1805, Felici to Ségur, issues with Bonacosi.

¹⁰⁰ ASMI, Atti di Governo, Potenze Sovrane 148, 25 mars 1805, Maret to Felici twenty-five sample invitations from French *Sacre*.

proceedings. As already observed, the greatest difficulty in creating affinities in Northern Italy was that local and governmental elites were divided. This was specially the case with the courts of law and the *togati*, or lawyers, who inhabited them. They were viciously jealous of their dignity.

Unlike France, the satellite Kingdom of Italy possessed two *tribunali di revisione* based in Milan and Bologna.¹⁰¹ These institutions created an extra level of judgement between the supreme *tribunale di cassazione* and the departmental *tribunali d'appello*. These senior judges were incensed that they had been overlooked when it came to the list of attendees. They complained bitterly to Spannochi, the minister of justice, in early April.¹⁰² The *tribunale di revisione* of Bologna used their remonstrance as a pretext to ignite municipal rivalries, and demanded the right to process in front of their Milanese counterpart.¹⁰³ Determined not to be excluded, from this disagreement, the presidents and commissioners of the courts of appeal requested clarification on where they would be placed in the realm's order of precedence.

The initial answer, they were given, behind the prefects and departmental authorities, caused an explosion of discontent. The unfortunate Spannochi and Ségur were showered with complaints. Therefore, the original plan had to be amended to take into account the pride of the local Italian judiciary. Between 22-23 April, a number of ceremonial compromises were reached. The presidents of the *tribunale di revisione* were placed between the *contabilità nazionale* and prefects within the pecking order. Finally, the presidents of the appeal courts were to process ahead of the departmental and municipal authorities.¹⁰⁴ This seems to have

¹⁰¹ ASMI, Atti di Governo, Potenze Sovrane 148, 29 aprile 1805, Felici to Aldini, Ségur has refused to adjudicate in the row between the appeal courts of Milan and Bologna.

¹⁰² ASMI, Atti di Governo, Potenze Sovrane 148.

¹⁰³ ASMI, Atti di Governo, Potenze Sovrane 148, 27 aprile 1805, Tribunale di revisione of Bologna wished to precede that of Milan in all processions.

¹⁰⁴ ASMI, Atti di Governo, Potenze Sovrane 148, 22 aprile 1805, Spannochi to Aldini, Judicial authorities should be given their due rank; 23 aprile 1805, Spannochi to Aldini, courts to march ahead of departmental and municipal authorities, while the presidenti and commissari of the tribunali di revisione were placed between the *contabilità nazionale* and prefects; & problems obviously persisted after events in Milan. 4 giugno 1805, Spannochi to Felici,

saved the self-respect of the judges and staved-off one of those farcical ceremonial disputes that were so prevalent during the *ancien régime*. This incident did show that, despite the Empire's ability to recruit native collaborators, it could not fight hierarchical jealousy and the atavistic forces of localism. The Coronation reminded Italian of past hatreds, old privileges, new rivalries and ambitions. Collaboration could, at times, draw the Imperial power into petty squabbles that it wanted to avoid. In this instance, a draw was achieved in the struggle between Bologna and Milan. A similar result was found for the rivalry that pitted administrative against judicial authorities of the realm.

Perhaps surprisingly, given future events, the Church proved collaborative, enthusiastic even, in the organisation of the ritual. Portalis, the French Minister of Cults, in Paris had raised the issue concerning how Napoleon was to be greeted by clergy of the parishes and dioceses in which he transited on his way to Milan. Ségur decided, in consultation with Portalis & Giovanni Bovara (the Italian minister of cults) and Cardinal Caprara, to use the etiquette that had been established during the First Consul's official visit to the Belgian departments of 1803.¹⁰⁵ The Emperor was to be received by the local clergy in full pontifical robes with church bells ringing. Holy Water was proffered, as was incense, and finally the verse '*salvum fac Napoleonem Imperatorem nostrum domine*' was to be sung. There seem to have been no incidents and indeed the clergy were deeply excited to meet the Emperor. None more so, than Mgr. De Carli, the abbot of Santa Barbara near Mantua, who wrote several letters begging to be invited to the Coronation.¹⁰⁶ He argued that his abbey had been privileged during the old regime, and that its abbot was entitled to episcopal honours. He highlighted that he was *ex*

judges remained unhappy with their position and precedence in the seating arrangements in the Cathedral of Modena for a Te Deum to celebrate Napoleon's Coronation.

¹⁰⁵ ASMI, Atti di Governo, Potenze Sovrane 148, Extrait. Cerimoial [sic] à observer pour la réception du premier Consul dans les Villes ou il se rendra ; & see also online, Voyage de Bonaparte en Belgique en 1803

< <http://napoleonbonaparte.be/NBB/Voyage-de-Napol%C3%A9on-en-Belgique.pdf> > [last accessed 12/09/2015].

¹⁰⁶ ASMI, Atti di Governo, Potenze Sovrane 148, 2 maggio 1805 Mantua, Bovara to Felci

officio a papal chaplain and, to drive the point home, he assured, the minister of cults, that he owned sufficiently ‘luminous’ robes to attend the ceremony with apposite dignity.¹⁰⁷ When faced with such overwhelming force, the government wisely included this far from humble ecclesiastic among the guests invited to the ceremony, and thus ensured his continued loyalty to the regime.

The composition of the musical accompaniment for the liturgy was not a problem for a city that housed *la Scala* and many of Italy’s foremost composers. It is generally accepted, though not conclusively established, that the Bavarian Giovanni Simone Mayr (one of Donizetti’s masters), Napoleon’s favourite composer, was invited to create a *Te Deum* for the Coronation.¹⁰⁸ This was particularly fitting for Milan, given that, according to tradition, Saint Ambrose, the patron Saint of the city, had composed the first *Te Deum* in the fifth century. The greatest difficulties, as ever, were logistical in nature. The cathedral and royal palace were faced with a shortage of musical instruments.¹⁰⁹ It took the great pianist and composer, Francesco Pollini, a former pupil of Mozart, over two months to buy the necessary pianos and strings for the Coronation.¹¹⁰ He also hired two hundred and fifty vocal artists (half the number that had sung at Notre Dame six months previously).¹¹¹ Milan lacked a sufficient number of male sopranos. Pollini had to hire, Fr. Angelo Guggi of Pavia, a contralto, the male sopranos and contraltos of Crema, abbot Luigi di Novara, a soprano and all the choristers of the cathedral of Monza, to make up this shortfall.¹¹² Rehearsals only began on 15 May 1805, and despite

¹⁰⁷ ASMI, Atti di Governo, Potenze Sovrane 148, undated, Carli to Felci.

¹⁰⁸ D. J. Grout & H. Weigel Williams, *A Short History of Opera* (New York, 2003), pp.384-5

¹⁰⁹ ASMI, Atti di Governo, Potenze Sovrane 144, 30 marzo 1805 Pollini to Felci, purchase of a pianoforte for the royal apartments in Milan.

¹¹⁰ E. Borri, ‘La Scuola Pianistica Milanese nell’Ottocento: i “doici studi op.3” per pianoforte di Francesco Sangalli,’ in S. Martinotti ed. *La musica a Milano, in Lombardia e oltre*, 2 vols. (Milan, 1996), I, 182.

¹¹¹ ASMI, Atti di Governo, Potenze Sovrane 144, undated report (probably early May), from Pollini to either Felici or Bovara.

¹¹² Ibid.

such a short run in time, the choir and orchestra performed admirably.¹¹³ Even the musical arrangements displayed the ‘ornamentalist’ agenda for this ceremony. The Emperor did not impose French compositions but rather allowed native musicians and composers to celebrate his accession to the Italian throne.

¹¹³ ASMI, Atti di Governo, Potenze Sovrane 144, report by Pollini, 3 May singers accept their contract; undated list of members of orchestra and choir for 26 May 1805; undated report (probably mid-May) stating that rehearsals had begun in earnest with a 220 strong choir, each chorister received a zecchino at every rehearsal. Duroc received the request that musicians be paid in advance on 24 May 1805.

IV

It only remained for the protagonist to enter the scene. In April, Napoleon had made a stopover in Turin, where he had met Imperial administrators, local authorities and a delegation from Milan's Municipality to welcome him.¹¹⁴ More importantly, and this is often forgotten, the Pope, who was making his slow return to Rome from Paris, also had an audience with the Emperor. They met at the former Sabaudian palace of Stupinigi on 25 April.¹¹⁵ Unfortunately, the content of the Pontiff's conversation with the Emperor is unknown. However, just the fact that this meeting took place emphasises that Franco-Papal relations remained, on the surface at least, cordial. There is no conclusive evidence that Pius VII's failure to crown the French Emperor King of Italy was meant to be an insult. The event did not require the pope's presence. The ceremony was a simple crowning and not a solemn anointing. From Turin, Napoleon first set foot on Italian soil at Mezzana-Corti where crowds cheered him and a celebratory cannonade greeted his arrival. He then stopped at Pavia, where he visited the university, meeting Alessandro Volta, the inventor of the electric battery, and inspected the cannon foundries of the city.¹¹⁶ Here he attempted to rally his Italian administrators, intellectuals and engineers by highlighting how the Empire treasured their industry and contribution to the common good.

During this progress, Josephine and his sister Elisa accompanied him. Family bickering were never absent from Bonaparte's life. In this the Italian Coronation mirrored perfectly that of Notre Dame the previous year. He wrote several letters to his mother about his youngest brother Jerome, and the marriage he had contracted with an unsuitable American lady, Betsy

¹¹⁴ A. Pillepich, *Milan Capitale Napoléonienne 1800-1814* (Paris, 2001), pp.398-402.

¹¹⁵ *Giornale Italiano*, 1 maggio 1805, No.52, p.213. Description of Papal Meeting.

¹¹⁶ *Giornale Italiano*, 8 maggio 1805, No.55, p.224, on 5 May Bologna announced its intention to erect a bronze statue in honour of Napoleon.

Giornale Italiano, Supplement to no.55, p.229, description of festivities in Pavia. Napoleon visited the University where he received in audience Volta and Scarpa. He then inspected the cannon foundries in the city.

Patterson.¹¹⁷ Napoleon commanded his brother to abandon his wife, promising a secular and (somewhat optimistically as it turned out) religious annulment. Jerome was ordered to Milan where he met with his brother shortly before the crowning.¹¹⁸ Napoleon praised him for accepting to give up his affair in return for his benevolence and patronage.¹¹⁹ As always, even on these joyous occasions Bonaparte's life was an irresistible tornado of ideas, events and decisions. His correspondence in Italy showed no sign of abating, during this three-month trip, several hundred letters were despatched from Piedmont and Lombardy across his Empire. Legislation was drafted, military preparations ordered and diplomatic instructions issued; like its master, the Empire never slept.

During these weeks, Italians contrived to demonstrate their enthusiasm for their King's impending arrival. All the great officers, corporations and army regiments published dozens of tributes to their new King in the official state gazette: *il giornale italiano*.¹²⁰ These accolades read like a competition in flattery and hyperbole. Some local poetry societies issued prizes for the best pastoral ode celebrating the Italian Coronation.¹²¹ The Kingdom's historiographer royal and poet laureate, Vincenzo Monti, published an ode, entitled *il beneficio*, dedicated, as the author put it, to the 'hero of the century.' This poem so pleased Napoleon that it was printed in lavishly decorated editions and distributed at state expense.¹²² The summit of such

¹¹⁷ 'I have given the order to this prodigal child to come to Milan.' NAP NOUV CORRES, No.9877. Stupinigi 2 floréal an XIII [22 avril 1805], V, 224; & C. Boyer Lewis, *Elizabeth Patterson Bonaparte: An American Aristocrat in the Early Republic* (Philadelphia, 2012).

¹¹⁸ NAP NOUV CORRES, No.9985, to Fouché, Stupinigi 3 floréal an XIII [23 avril 1805], V, 228.

¹¹⁹ 'Your marriage is annulled by your own volition, I return to you my friendship, and I will resume those sentiments which I have held since your infancy, hoping that you will be worthy of them through the efforts that you will make to earn my recognition by serving in my armies,' in NAP NOUV CORRES, Nos. 9986 & 9987, Alexandrie, 16 Floréal an XIII [6 mai 1805], V, 274.

¹²⁰ C. Capra, V. Castronovo and G. Ricuperati eds., *La Stampa Italiana dal '500 all'800* (Bari, 1986), pp.502-33.

¹²¹ A. Piromalli & T. Iermano, *Le Feste dei Pastori del Rubicone per Napoleone I Re d'Italia* (Florence, 1994), passim.

¹²² Atti di Governo, Potenze Sovrane 144, 28 aprile 1805, Monti requested permission to compose an ode in honour of the 'Hero of the century's' accession to the Italian throne.

obsequiousness was reached when the *Corpo Legislativo* was presented to the King in the royal palace of Milan. Its president stated:

You Sire alone, combine all those virtues that are distributed among many great men. The founders of nations, hail you as superior to every other Hero, especially in the study of war and peace. You twice conquered and brought order to Italy. You may not be the only man in history, to have washed away the torpid squalor of the crown, that passed from the Lombards onto the successors of Charlemagne, but you will give it its greatest lustre.¹²³

Beneath such official and congratulatory statements, it is difficult to gauge the ‘real’ reactions of Italians to Napoleon’s investiture as their King. The ability to measure public opinion in early nineteenth century Milan is deeply hampered and compromised, by the destruction of records, especially police reports, during the bombing of the city in 1943. There is little trace of bulletins or evidence of the public spirit that animated ordinary Italians at this time. So a reconstruction of public opinion during a time when newspapers were heavily censored remains extremely difficult.¹²⁴

There is significant evidence that from 1796-1814 large swathes of the north Italian population attended and participated in the many public festivities organised by their French overlords. One of the earliest events, ‘the feast of gratitude to the French Republic in 1796,’ surprisingly brought tens of thousands of spectators to Milan.¹²⁵ It is doubtful that significant participation in the celebrations, feasting, eating, drinking and dancing that followed such

¹²³ *Giornale Italiano*, Second supplement No.58, p.247.

¹²⁴ Capra, Castronovo and Ricuperati, *La Stampa Italiana*, pp.502-33.

¹²⁵ L. Gagliardi, *Milano in rivoluzione: patrioti e popolo di fronte all'invasione francese, 1796-1799* (Milan, 2009), pp.94-5.

events highlighted a population with a deep ideological commitment to the Napoleonic Empire. Indeed, significant peasant atavistic *jacqueries* and insurrections between 1802 to 1809 show that there was opposition to the regime at a grass roots level, even in the satellite Kingdom.¹²⁶ *Ancien régime* legacies, local economic contexts and political geography are variables that make generalisations about northern Italy pretty unsustainable at the best of times. The truth probably lies in the somewhat banal observation that most citizen/subjects avoided engagement with the state whether it was Napoleonic, Habsburg, or finally Italian.¹²⁷ Yet, for all its brutality the French Empire in its Italian satellite did try to make state rule a softer exercise of power, especially in 1805. Piedmont followed later by Liguria, Tuscany, and eventually Calabria received decidedly harsher treatment.¹²⁸

Finally, after much anticipation, Napoleon had made his triumphal entry into his Italian capital on 8 May through Porta Ticinese (or Marengo as it was then called).¹²⁹ Escorted by dozens of French Imperial Grandees, the Emperor unleashed a literal charm offensive. French and Italian ministers, generals, bishops and administrators all mingled together flaunting the ‘ornamentalist’ credentials of the new imperial regimes. Cannonades, receptions, formal court presentations, military reviews and ministerial business all awaited the Emperor. So too did Eugène de Beauharnais, the new viceroy, who had been in Milan since early March.¹³⁰ He was to spend much time with his stepfather and was given, in the course of the subsequent weeks, detailed instructions on how to despatch the business of government while never deviating from orders from Paris. Most importantly of all, the viceroy had the difficult mission of keeping

¹²⁶ A. Varni, *Bologna Napoleonica, Potere e Società dalla Repubblica Cisalpina al Regno d'Italia* (Bologna, 1973); pp.111-44; & R. Spadoni, *Le Insorgenze contadine in Val Padana nel periodo napoleonico 1804-1814* (Bologna, 1972), passim.

¹²⁷ This view has been expressed with wit and verve by D. Gilmore, *The Pursuit of Italy, A History of its Regions and Their Peoples* (London, 2011), esp.7-38.

¹²⁸ Broers, *The Napoleonic Empire in Italy, 1796-1814*, pp.175-212; & U. Caldora, *Calabria Napoleonica 1806-1815* (Cosenza, 1985), pp.400-39.

¹²⁹ Pillepich, *Milan Capitale Napoléonienne*, p.400.

¹³⁰ C. Oman, *Napoleon's Viceroy* (New York, 1966), pp.169-92.

the interests of different competing local elites in equilibrium. Not an easy task in a satellite Kingdom created by fusing five *ancien régime* duchies and principalities together. The centrifugal forces of this heritage always threatened French attempts at instilling a shared sense of allegiance to the new Kingdom ruled from Milan.

At La Scala Napoleon attended a performance of *Lodoiska*, his favourite opera, by Mayr on 21 May.¹³¹ This was a classic attempt at *ralliement*. By placing local magnates together in a non-confrontational social setting, it was hoped a shared sense of investment in the Imperial community could be inculcated. Due to bad weather, and the fact that preparations were behind schedule, the Coronation was delayed by four days to Sunday 26 May. This postponement also allowed for greater security precautions to be organised by Milan's prefect of police Luini. No specific threats or plots were identified, it seems more the case that the prefect wanted to ensure that there were no hostages to fortune. Guards, soldiers and gendarmes doubled their patrols through the streets of Milan as a precautionary measure.

On 23 May three state carriages were sent to Monza to transfer solemnly the Iron crown to the Duomo.¹³² This procession was hardly a mere formality. The inhabitants of Monza had resisted bitterly for centuries all attempts at removing the Iron crown from their treasury. In 1796 they had defeated the commissioners of the French Republic's attempt at repossessing this precious artefact.¹³³ For the people of this town the crown represented a symbol of their local community and vital element in their religious identity. They were not merely going to surrender it to the French, and worse the Milanese, without formal guarantees. The regime showed itself sympathetic to the concerns of the inhabitants of this town in Brianza. A formal cortege of troops, ecclesiastics and ceremonial officials escorted this precious royal heirloom

¹³¹ *Giornale Italiano*, 22 maggio 1805, No.61, p.268.

¹³² ASMI, *Atti di Governo*, *Potenze Sovrane* 148, 22 May 1805, Ceremonial instructions for the translation of the Iron Crown from Monza to Milan.

¹³³ Pillepich, 'Napoleon 1er et la Couronne de Fer,' pp.202-6.

to Milan. The archpriest and the president of the municipality of Monza were to stand guard over the crown throughout its time in Milan. This again highlighted that accommodation rather than confrontation was the purpose of the Coronation.

Finally, after all these exhausting preparations and costly expenditure, the ceremony was ready. In terms of setting this Coronation could not have been more different from that of Paris. It was a sunny warm spring day and Milan's cathedral was substantially larger, in surface space, than Notre Dame. Everything boded well for the day. A 'great throne' was positioned on a platform of twenty-four steps surrounded by four statues representing Imperial victories. This symbol of royal power was erected at the back of the nave just before the principal entrance to the cathedral. At the foot of the altar stood a 'lesser throne.'¹³⁴ The beginning of the ceremony was set for noon, and invitees were expected to take their seats long before the arrival of the royal procession.

At ten in the morning, the electoral colleges, the *Consulta di Stato*, *Consiglio Legislativo*, *Corte di Cassazione & Tribunali di Revisione*, & finally *Contabilità Nazionale*, were to process from their chambers, with military escorts, to the cathedral. A second procession of departmental, municipal and military officials was to arrive at the cathedral shortly thereafter. All were to be accompanied, and shown to their seats, before eleven. Detachments of the French imperial and Italian Royal Guard lined the streets and filled the square of Milan's Duomo to add lustre to the occasion.¹³⁵ These multi-national processions epitomised the 'ornamentalist' vision of Empire that the Milanese Kingdom embodied.

Seating arrangements also followed this rationale and, as befitted this occasion, were complex. In front of the great throne, seated on either side, of the great nave, were the three

¹³⁴ For the best description of the Cathedral decorations see, ASMI Atti di Governo, Potenze Sovrane 146, Progetto di Cerimoniale per l'Incoronazione.

¹³⁵ E. Pigni, *La Guardia di Napoleone Re d'Italia* (Milan, 2001), pp.51-7.

electoral colleges.¹³⁶ On either side of the throne itself, the ministers and great officers of state sat. Behind them on the right was the *Consulta di Stato* and on the left the *Consiglio Legislativo*. The *Corpo Legislativo* was to be on the right and left of the electoral colleges. Beyond them, at a further distance along the nave, were seated the judges of the *Corte di Cassazione*, followed by the *Tribunali di Revisione* and the *Contabilità*. At the very bottom of the nave were the prefects, courts of appeal, departmental, municipal administrations and military officers.

On the right of the throne was the Empress' tribune. Chairs and stools were provided, a few steps beneath the great throne, for the Imperial family. Prince Eugène was seated on the left, and Elisa, princess of Piombino, was placed on the right. A special tribune on the left was constructed for the *corps diplomatique*. At eleven, Cardinal Caprara led the archbishops, bishops, vicars generals, clergy and choir in a procession from the archiepiscopal palace to the cathedral. Bearing a canopy and escorted by a delegation of clergymen, he proceeded to the entrance of the cathedral to greet the Empress at 11:45. After she had taken her seat, it was time for the imperial-royal procession to pass through a special gallery that had been built to connect the royal palace of Milan to the Duomo.

The Ambrosian rite that guided the liturgy, differed from the ordinary roman mass more in terms of style than substance. Among the main differences that distinguish the Milanese liturgical tradition from the Roman are: 1. there are more antiphons, 2. the bidding prayers follow the homily, 3. the creed follows the *offertorio* 4. mass ends with three *kyrie eleisons*.¹³⁷ The observance of this rite, so specific to the diocese of Milan, showed that when expedient, the French could show themselves sensitive to the cultural and religious practices of their

¹³⁶ Most of the description that follows here is derived from the final ceremonial procedures drafted for 26 May 1805. See, ASMI, Atti di Governo, Potenze Sovrane 148. Any gaps have been filled through the use of ACMM, Fondo Liturgico, Cart.44, Fasc.1.

¹³⁷ Valli, *Breve introduzione al rito ambrosiano*, pp.37-52.

subjects. The rite contained no ultramontane elements which made it ideally suited to celebrate the birth of the neo- Ghibelline Italian Kingdom.

The official description of the ceremony and liturgy were related in detail among the pages of the *Giornale Italiano* and official collections of documents published after the event.¹³⁸ Given that the French *Sacre* is so well known, a step by step recital of each gesture, liturgical prayer and moment of the Coronation is unnecessary. Instead this article will concentrate on the principal differences with the French precedent and focus on the more ‘ornamentalist’ aspects of the ritual. Perhaps the most striking difference with the ceremony in December was that Josephine was not crowned queen of Italy. No rationale was provided to explain why the queen-consort did not receive this investiture.

Napoleon was already a crowned monarch and to underscore this truth, he wore the Imperial Regalia of France as he entered the cathedral. This had also been the case in Paris but with two small differences: he was dressed in the robes and mantle of the King of Italy. Perhaps unsubtly, the new diadem of Italy was placed inside the Imperial crown. This was not a relationship of equals. Behind the heralds, guards and masters of ceremonies, that preceded the cortege, marched the ministers and great officers of the Kingdom of Italy. They carried the honours (ornaments/crown jewels) of the Kingdom, namely: the sword, sceptre, ring and hand of justice. Behind them marched the grand officers of the French Empire carrying the honours of the French Empire. Finally, the Cardinal Archbishop of Bologna Carlo Oppizzoni, was given the supreme distinction of carrying forth the Iron Crown.¹³⁹

The object of the rituals was the metamorphosis of Napoleon from Emperor of the French into King of Italy. Another aspect of these proceedings was that, within this ceremonial

¹³⁸ *Giornale Italiano*, 27 maggio 1805, No.63, p.274; Supplement, No.63, pp.277-8; 29 maggio 1805, No.64, pp.280-1; & Anon, *Documenti Officiali Relativi al Nuovo Regno d'Italia e All'Incoronazione di Napoleone Bonaparte Primo Imperatore de' Francesi e Re d'Italia* (Milan, 1805), passim.

¹³⁹ ACMM, Fondo Liturgico, Cart.44.

setting, Italian great officers and officials took centre stage over their French counterparts. Admittedly, the surrender of the Imperial regalia to the French great officers followed by the presentation of the Italian royal regalia to the King by the Italian great officers was rather mystifying. At the solemn moment of investiture, Napoleon gave up his imperial insignia to Moncey, Brune, Champagny, Lannes, Berthier and Talleyrand. The grand officers of the Italian Kingdom, Melzi, Aldini Oriani, Bovara, Eugène and Litta, in turn, then presented the Cardinal-Archbishop with the ring, sword, hand of justice and sceptre; each item was blessed and presented to the Emperor-King.

Replicating the French emblem, the Italian hand of justice had its full five fingers outstretched. Medieval versions of this ornament had tended to display three fingers positioned in the gesture of a Trinitarian blessing.¹⁴⁰ One suspects that this iconographic ‘twist’ was supposed to symbolise enlightened man grasping his own destiny rather than being at the mercy of supernatural forces. Napoleon was a master of hubris. The great chamberlain of Italy, Litta, placed the mantle of the Kingdom on the King’s shoulders. The processional routes and movements taken by the grand officers around the altar and nave were extremely complex. It must have taken Ségur quite some time to direct each person and ensure that traffic jams and collisions were avoided. Mesmerizingly, three separate sets of regalia moved around the nave, altar and choir according to the different stages of the ceremony. The climax, of course, was the crowning itself which occurred post *introito exclusive* and after the blessing of the other royal ornaments. Napoleon approached the altar alone. Here he raised the Iron Crown and then placed it on his head and recited the phrase (attributed to the Lombard Kings):

¹⁴⁰ These ornaments are today, perhaps ironically, housed in the Museo del Risorgimento of Milan. For an analysis of the hand of Justice in the French Ceremony see, Lentz, *Nouvelle Histoire du Premier Empire*, I, 84.

Dio me la data guai a chi la toccherà! [God has given it to me woe betide he who should touch it].¹⁴¹

At this point, the Emperor-King resumed the lesser throne before the altar. Here he received a benediction and an exhortation from the Cardinal Archbishop in the following terms: ‘*vivat Imperator et rex in aeternum.*’ The congregation replied thunderously with the same words and the sound of a twenty-one gun salute was heard outside, announcing to the city and the world that the Coronation had taken place. The ‘*vivat*’ was given a triumphant musical accompaniment by Pollini (unfortunately no modern recordings exist). The mass then continued as normal. At the offertory the ladies of the court led by the Countess Paravicini and followed by the Duchess Litta brought the royal gifts to the altar. The ritual ended with a solemn *Te Deum*. After this, all the dignitaries and the Imperial processed out of the Duomo.

Needless to say, the celebrations were only beginning. A cortege of thirteen carriages awaited them outside to set off for the nearby Basilica di Sant’Ambrogio (the city’s second church).¹⁴² With great fanfare and pomp the Imperial cortege travelled, through Milan, to pay its respects to the shrine and relics of the great fifth century patron saint of the city. Here the monks and canons of the Basilica had prepared a special service of thanks giving. The great officers of the French Empire and Italian Kingdom stood side by side in the cortege. The French Grand Equerry Caulaincourt rode to the right hand of the Imperial and Royal carriage, while Caprara’s nephew the Grand Equerry of Italy rode to the left.¹⁴³ On the right, the position of

¹⁴¹ Berterelli, the liturgical master of ceremonies, rather pithily recorded, in the ceremonial logbook for the Cathedral Canons, the following: ‘when it came to the crown, his Majesty himself picked it up and placed it on his head.’ See, ACMM, Fondo Liturgico, Cart.44. Fasc.1, ‘Cerimoniale Liturgico dell’incoronazione di Napoleone.’

¹⁴² ASMI, Atti di Governo, Potenze Sovrane 148, 11 mai 1805, Ségur to Bovara, instructing him to prepare the Basilica for a thanks giving service; 21 maggio 1805, Luini, prefect of police, to the municipal administration of Milan, informing them that after the Coronation the Emperor would go to the basilica of St. Ambrogio. He ordered that the streets of the city should be cleaned and policed in order to allow the Imperial carriages to pass unobstructed.

¹⁴³ Ségur and Stampa-Soncino, *Ceremoniale [sic] del Corteggio delle LL. MM. Imperiali, e RR. Per trasferirsi a S. Ambrogio* (Milan, 1805).

honour, sat the French Empire's grandees beside them on the left were their Italian counterparts. This sub-alternate role was not a humiliation but represented Italy's relative strength, in economic and military terms, within the great Empire. The whole ceremony sought to speak of partnership rather than degradation. The French Emperor had wished to wear and hold the emblems of his new tributary monarchy. Celebrations were ordered also across the diocese and prefectures of Metropolitan France.¹⁴⁴

For the following two weeks the festivities would continue unabated. There were horse and chariot races. Here the nobility of Italy raced their finest thoroughbreds to the delight of the officers of the French and Italian armies.¹⁴⁵ A hot air balloon shipped from Rome arrived and ascended the skies of Milan in the gardens of palazzo Belgioioso. A large ball was held at la Scala, and General Pino, Minister for War, hosted a ministerial banquet for the Imperial couple. The initial firework display failed, due a technical problem on the evening of the Coronation, and was re-scheduled for the first week of June.¹⁴⁶

The Emperor-King also distributed dowries for orphan girls to marry soldiers (apparently the object of this exercise was to encourage conscription). Prizes for agriculture and inventions were bestowed on scientists and agronomists on 29 May.¹⁴⁷ Somewhat uncharacteristically, Napoleon, issued a general pardon to criminals and draft dodgers. The celebration finally ended when Napoleon departed on 10 June to visit Brescia, Verona, Mantua, Bologna, Modena, Parma, Piacenza and the battlefield of Castiglione before beginning the return journey back to Paris. Two days later, Josephine briefly quit her husband's triumphal

¹⁴⁴ Archives Nationales (Paris), Pouvoir Exécutif, Série AF IV Secrétariat d'état Impériale, 1045, Cultes, letters from mayors and Bishops describing celebrations across France for Napoleon's Italian Coronation.

¹⁴⁵ ASMI, Atti di Governo, Potenze Sovrane 144, dos. Corse delle bighe e fanti.

¹⁴⁶ ASMI, Atti di Governo, Potenze Sovrane 144, 29 mai 1805, Bonomini to Segur

¹⁴⁷ ASMI, Atti di Governo, Potenze Sovrane 144, 4 aprile 1805, Felci to the Prefects, requesting that they nominate poor unmarried girls in their areas for state sponsored dowries created to celebrate the Coronation.

tour, to visit the Borromean islands on Lago Maggiore.¹⁴⁸ The Imperial couple left Italy on 5 July and reached Fontainebleau a week later.

¹⁴⁸ ASMI, Atti di Governo, Potenze Sovrane 176, 22 giugno 1805, Consultore Costabili, Intendente Generale de' beni della Corona to Felci, noting the expenses incurred by Josephine on her visit to the Borromean islands.

V

On the face of it, the Milan Coronation, like every other before it, sought to present an ordered cosmology and hierarchy. As anthropologists, such as Clifford Geertz and Don Handelman, have argued, rituals of power seek, through shared experience, to portray the world as ‘it should be’ rather than ‘as it is.’¹⁴⁹ The Italian Coronation allowed Napoleon and his officials to stage a *tableau vivant* where hierarchy, heritage and the imperial imagination all combined to ‘re-present’ how the French envisaged their relationship with their Italian citizen/subjects.¹⁵⁰ As Thierry Lentz remarked in relation to the French Coronation: what Napoleon achieved in terms of spectacle he lost in terms of clarity.¹⁵¹ Judging from the multi-page newspaper reports and odes written for the occasion, nobody was quite sure in simple terms how to interpret Napoleon’s investiture as King of Italy. This was pretty much the same sense of confusion that had greeted the *Sacre* at Notre Dame. Napoleon’s power and might was clear, but the legitimacy and symbolism that was supposed to underpin the birth of his dynasty was probably lost on most spectators.

As ever, he simply did too much in too short a space of time. Four crowns, three sets of jewels and ornaments were far too many for any one man to yield at any one time. Unlike the Gods of the British Raj, Napoleon only had two hands. The problem with rituals is that they assume that audiences will read and interpret clearly their message. Yet, spectators have their own agendas, which can cause ample misreading of rituals. This also explains why historians have also either read the Coronation as an exercise in cultural hegemony or, worse, as an irrelevance. It was neither one nor the other. It was an attempt to show that Italian history and

¹⁴⁹ E. Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2nd edn. 2005), C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York, 1973), Ch.6 Ritual and Social Change; & D. Handelman, *Models and Mirrors towards an anthropology of public events* (Cambridge, 1990), pp.24-8.

¹⁵⁰ Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, pp.168-90.

¹⁵¹ Lentz, *Nouvelle Histoire du Premier Empire*, I, 90-101.

culture could find accommodation within the French Empire. As stated at the beginning of this article, it was an ‘ornamentalist’ moment *par excellence*; an attempt to establish shared affinities. Ceremonies and rituals can, at times, seem like photographs. They capture static moments in history and fail to account for the movement of time.¹⁵²

After 1805, Italy’s position and importance changed substantially as the Empire’s dominance over Europe mushroomed. The shifting geo-strategic boundaries of the Napoleonic behemoth meant that the Peninsula was not quite as critical to security as it had been. Germany, Poland and Spain became the new marches.¹⁵³ The ‘ornamentalism’ of 1805 lost its urgency within the calculations of the Napoleonic Empire builders. Imperial events, like the controversial feast of Saint Napoleon, or special dynastic occasions like the marriage to Marie Louise and the birth of the King of Rome, took priority over the anniversary of the Coronation in the Duomo. Yet for all that, it never completely disappeared and its legacy continued to be felt as attempts to rally the Lombards and Emilians continued unabated throughout the existence of the Italian Kingdom.

Naturally there were new complications. The treaty of Pressburg of 1806 added the inhabitants of the defunct Republic of Venice into the mix, and two years later the population of the Papal Marches also joined the satellite Kingdom. The addition of Eastern and Central regions made this Italian state considerably less socially homogenous. As Livio Antonielli, and others have shown, the elites of these newly annexed provinces proved decidedly unenthusiastic when offered opportunities to collaborate.¹⁵⁴ The history and mindset of these regions made them very different from Lombardy and Emilia-Romagna. The construction of affinities beyond the Milanese and Bolognese centre proved very of difficult, if not impossible.

¹⁵² Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, pp.15-88.

¹⁵³ Broers, *Europe under Napoleon*, chs. 4 & 5.

¹⁵⁴ Antonielli, *I Prefetti dell’Italia Napoleonica*, pp.301-38; & de Francesco, *L’Italia di Bonaparte*, pp.93-117.

‘Ornamentalism’ survived in the monarchical institutions inaugurated by the Coronation of May 1805. This was especially the case with the vice-regal court of Milan and the administrative cadre of the Kingdom. From 1805-1814, over one thousand five hundred Italians were invested with the Order of the Iron Crown (founded on 5 June 1805).¹⁵⁵ Similar in nature to the Legion of Honour, this award sought to create a synthesis between the dynastic orders of chivalry of the past and more modern notions of recompensing merit & state service.¹⁵⁶ Emmuele Pigni has shown that twenty-one percent of members of the Iron Crown were civilians. Proportionally speaking, this was double the numbers of non-military members honoured with the Legion of Honour. The goal of inducing collaboration with Milanese and Emilian administrative, ecclesiastical and judicial elites continued unremittingly.

Napoleon’s last visit to Italy, during the winter of 1807, showed that both Emperor and local elites were keen to renew the associations and tributes that had lain dormant since the Coronation two years previously.¹⁵⁷ Yet the context was very different, and Napoleon’s own attitude to his Imperial state was evolving significantly. His final progress through Northern Italy occurred after his diplomatic triumph at Tilsit and just before the Spanish disaster. The Kingdom he visited was not the same as the one which had witnessed his coronation in 1805. The annexation of the Veneto and parts of Friuli, after Austerlitz, complexified significantly the social and regional dynamics of his North Italian satellite. Over half of the Emperor’s visit was spent touring these new provinces. In particular, and perhaps ominously, the lion’s share of his time was taken inspecting naval installations on the Adriatic and the military border with Austria. Prophetically, he warned Prince Eugène that the river Piave would be the key line of defence if ever these provinces were invaded by Hapsburg troops.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Pigni, *L’Ordine della Corona di Ferro*, p.59.

¹⁵⁶ L. Wodey, *L’Insigne de l’Honneur, de la Légion à l’Étoile* (Paris, 2005), pp. 29-46.

¹⁵⁷ Pingaud ‘Le dernier voyage de Napoléon en Italie (1807),’ *passim*.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, pp.531-34.

There were of course a host of events, ceremonies, including visits to La Fenice opera house and Te Deums in St Mark's to celebrate his visit to these newly annexed provinces. There were clearly 'ornamentalist' moments too. For example, the Patriarch of Venice, Nicolò Gamboni, was invested a dignitary of the Order of the Iron Crown.¹⁵⁹ During his visit to the Biblioteca Marciana, Napoleon bestowed the same order on its curator Morelli and provided 25,000 lire for the acquisition of new books.¹⁶⁰ However, as the work of Livio Antonielli has shown, the former Patricians of the *Serenissima* proved less willing and pliant than their Lombard and Emilian cousins.¹⁶¹ They had long traditions of Republican self-rule and domestic politics which made their incorporation into a larger Empire a depressing limitation on their former freedom. It was a Napoleonic policy, that important officials never serve in their home province. Consequently, the prefects, *podestas* (mayors), intendants and other officials who governed the Veneto were almost exclusively Lombard. Attempts to inject Venetians into administrative posts in other areas of the kingdom proved a decisive failure.¹⁶² Equally, the Emperor's decision to bypass Padua, (as it had protested against annexation into the Empire) on his triumphal progress from Milan to Venice, showed he did not quite relish or trust north-eastern Italians in the same way as he did others.

Back in Milan the Emperor made more of an effort to make Lombards and Emilian elites feel valued. Victory at the battle of Friedland, followed by the advantageous peace terms that followed at Tilsit in July 1807, meant that all of western and central Europe fell under France's hegemony. The Emperor's visit to Italy in November and December had all the makings of a dynastic summit. During this time, he was joined by Lucien from Rome, Joseph from Naples, and Elisa from Florence. To them were added his Beauharnais stepfamily and

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, p.530.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, p.529.

¹⁶¹ Antonielli, *I Prefetti dell'Italia Napoleonica*, pp.278-89.

¹⁶² Ibid, pp.289-99.

their Wittelsbach-in-laws. Indeed, King Maximilian Joseph of Bavaria, made the journey from Munich specially to join this epic clan reunion which would adjudicate on the future shape of Europe.¹⁶³ As events in Portugal and Spain deteriorated, the most pressing issue seems to have been which Bonaparte should rule which satellite kingdom.

The clearest indication that the French Empire had decided to expand its sphere of influence and power in Europe came with the promulgation of the famous ‘Milan decrees’ on 17 December 1807. These laws strengthened the provisions and regulations of the continental blockade and system against Britain. The decrees allowed French customs officials all over Europe not just to seize enemy vessels and goods, but also ships and cargo from neutral powers.¹⁶⁴ Italy had become the soft underbelly of a much greater trans-European monolith. It would be hasty to say that the ‘ornamentalist’ programme of 1805 had been abandoned. After all, the Kingdom of Italy provided Napoleon with 70,000 men, and officers, who would die in the blood-soaked plains of Catalonia and Russia.¹⁶⁵ The desire to rally Lombards and Emilians, through ceremonial and honorific inducements, may have cooled but had not disappeared.

¹⁶³ Pingaud, ‘Le dernier voyage de Napoléon en Italie (1807),’ pp.64-7.

¹⁶⁴ A. Grab, ‘The Kingdom of Italy and the Continental Blockade,’ in K. B. Aaslestad and J. Joor eds, *Revisiting Napoleon's Continental System* (Basingstoke, 2015), pp.98-113.

¹⁶⁵ F. della Peruta, *Esercito e Società nell'Italia Napoleonica* (Milan, 1996), pp.301-76.

Social Composition of the Nobility of the Kingdom of Italy

5 Grand Officers of the crown
7 Ministers
29 Chamberlains and Courtiers
39 Senators
34 Bishops and Archbishops
28 Counsellors of state
16 Magistrates
14 Prefects
10 Bureaucrats
8 Podestà (mayors of major cities)
10 members of the electoral colleges
28 Military officers
16 other civilian backgrounds

(of these number 61 had held titles under the ancien régime)

Source: Pigni, *L'Ordine della Corona di Ferro*, pp.151-2

In 1808, following the French precedent, Italian royal titles of nobility were established. Over two hundred and forty-four Italians were elevated to Napoleonic peerages that, unlike those of the *ancien régime*, carried no privileges.¹⁶⁶ Only two Italian families, the Litta Visconti Arese and the Visconti di Modrone, were rich enough to erect their properties, or *maggioraschi*, into hereditary duchies.¹⁶⁷ The table above shows that Italian civilian authorities almost monopolised the new nobility. The low presence of military officers (around eleven percent) was artificial, according to Pigni, and an additional eleven Italian generals and officers received French Imperial titles (which represents a modest four percent rise to fifteen percent overall). This is a notable difference with metropolitan France, where over sixty percent of the new nobility's membership came from military officers.¹⁶⁸ The Italian Satellite Kingdom was

¹⁶⁶ Pigni, *L'Ordine della Corona di Ferro*, pp.150-5.

¹⁶⁷ Capra, 'Nobili, Notabili, Elites,' p. 31.

¹⁶⁸ J. Tulard, *Napoléon et la Noblesse d'Empire*, (Paris, 2003), p.112.

extremely keen to provide rewards for civilian administrators to work in partnership with its French overlords.

Perhaps, the most unique innovation of all was Napoleon's decision, on 26 August 1811, to allow Italian *ancien régime* patricians within the Kingdom the option to apply for new Napoleonic titles.¹⁶⁹ This act, akin to the Tudor policy of surrender and re-grant in Ireland,¹⁷⁰ allowed twenty-one ex-patricians to apply for Napoleonic upgrades. Few aristocrats were willing to trade, and besmirch, their ancestral pedigree for the dubious legitimacy proffered by the French Empire's new marks of social distinction. *Ralliement* was a very slow process and military defeat cut it short prematurely. Although 'ornamentalism' did recede from the spotlight, after the Coronation, its legacy continued in the elite institutions established by Napoleon's Italian monarchy. One thing the Emperor never reneged was the promise that the French Imperial and Italian royal crowns, after his death, would not be combined in a personal union.

It could be argued, with some humour admittedly, that 'ornamentalism' explains, to a degree, why the Italian realm outlived the Empire, that had created it, by twenty-two days.¹⁷¹ After the abdication of Fontainebleau on 6 April 1814, Eugène and Melzi engaged in desperate last minute negotiations to save northern Italy from annexation and partition.¹⁷² Even their failure, did not entirely put an end to the legacy of the Coronation in 1805. Several former Italian collaborators served the successor regimes.¹⁷³ The Austrians in a grudging tribute to Napoleon's imperial system maintained much of the governmental apparatus of the Italian

¹⁶⁹ ASMI, Atti di Governo, Araldica, Parte Moderna, 2.

¹⁷⁰ C. Maginn, 'Surrender and Re-grant in the Historiography of Sixteenth-Century Ireland,' *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, Vol. 38, No. 4 (2007), pp. 955-74

¹⁷¹ Lentz, *Nouvelle Histoire du Premier Empire*, II, 547-50.

¹⁷² Spadoni, *Milano e la congiura militare nel 1814*, I, passim.

¹⁷³ M. Meriggi, *Gli Stati italiani prima dell'unità. Una storia istituzionale* (Bologna, 2011), pp.8-15; also helpful by id, 'Liberalismo o libertà dei ceti? Costituzionalismo Lombardo agli albori della Restaurazione,' *Studi Storici*, 2 (1981), pp. 315-343; & Pigni, *La Guardia di Napoleone*, pp.262-75.

Kingdom.¹⁷⁴ As Marco Meriggi has shown, Lombardy-Venetia owed a considerable institutional debt to its Napoleonic predecessor.¹⁷⁵ The most generous compliment the Habsburgs paid Napoleon was to retain, and rebrand, his Order of the Iron Crown. It continued to be bestowed until 1918, despite the loss of the lion's share of the dynasty's Italian lands.¹⁷⁶ The greatest sense of *déjà-vu* must have been felt when Ferdinand I of Austria processed down the nave of Milan's Duomo in 1838 to be crowned King of Lombardy-Venetia with the very Iron Crown that adorned the head of the 'usurper' three decades previously.¹⁷⁷ The Napoleonic 'ornamentalist' experiment of 1805 found a bizarre, though decidedly under-stated afterlife, within the Habsburg Empire.

University of Kent

AMBROGIO A. CAIANI

A.A.Caiani@kent.ac.uk

Orcid ID [0000-0003-3358-7277]

[Running Head: Napoleon's Italian Coronation 1805]

¹⁷⁴ J. Rath, *The Provisional Austrian Regime in Lombardy Venetia 1814-1815* (Austin, 1969), pp.3-53.

¹⁷⁵ M. Meriggi, *Il Regno Lombardo Veneto* (Turin, 1987), pp.33-93.

¹⁷⁶ J. Stolzer und C. Steeb eds., *Österreichs Orden, Vom Mittelalter bis zur Gegenwart* (Graz, 1996), pp.146–62.

¹⁷⁷ ASMI, *Atti di Governo, Potenze Sovrane* 246 & 247.